SHADOW STRIKES
25
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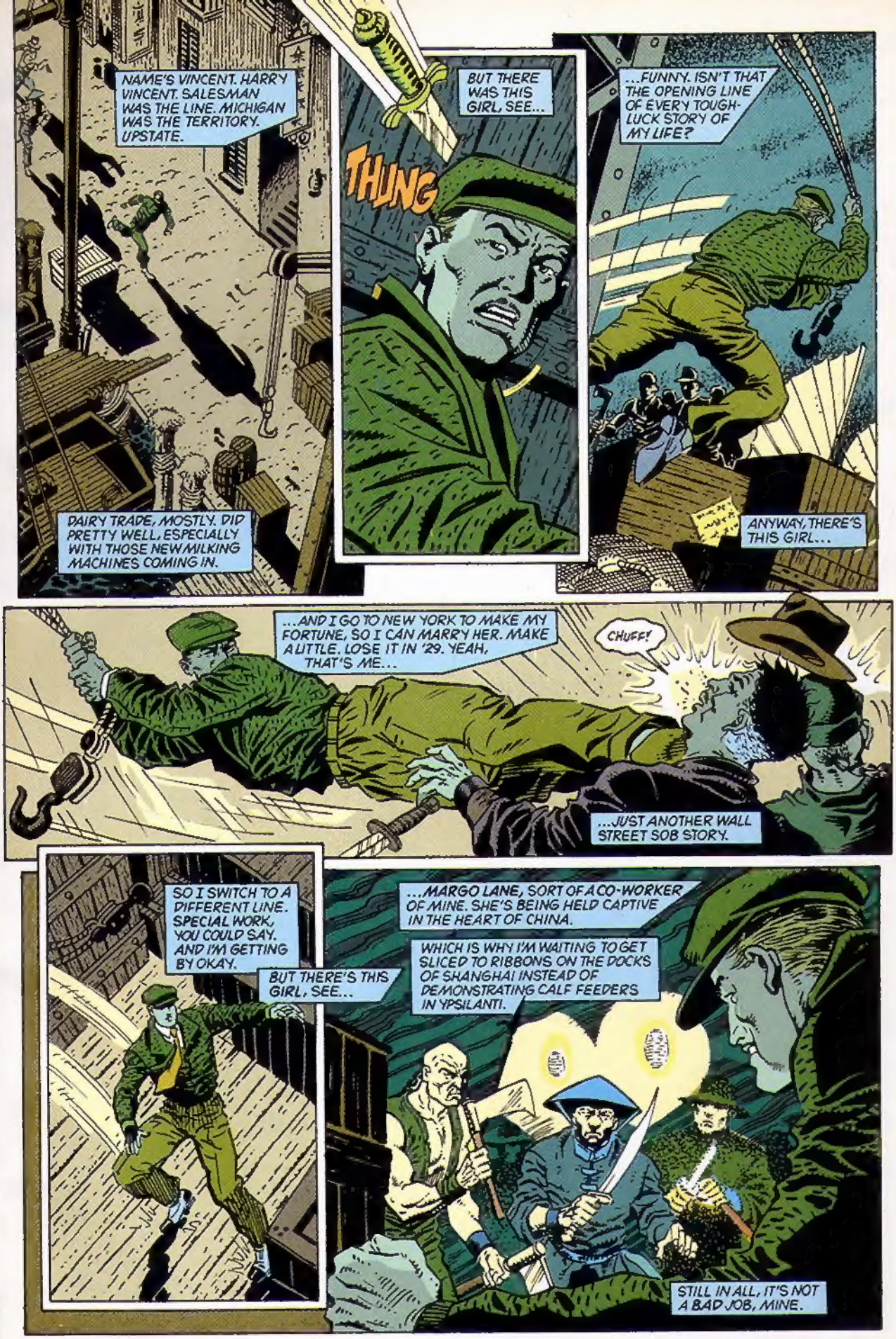
THE Shadow STRIKES!
THE SWORDS OF SHIWAN KHAN!
BY JONES, WHIGHAM & FERNANDEZ
DUBURKE '91


NAME'S VINCENT. HARRY VINCENT. SALESMAN WAS THE LINE. MICHIGAN WAS THE TERRITORY. UPSTATE.
DAIRY TRADE, MOSTLY. DID PRETTY WELL, ESPECIALLY WITH THOSE NEW MILKING MACHINES COMING IN.
THUNG
BUT THERE WAS THIS GIRL, SEE...
...FUNNY. ISN'T THAT THE OPENING LINE OF EVERY TOUGH-LUCK STORY OF MY LIFE?
ANYWAY, THERE'S THIS GIRL...
...AND I GO TO NEW YORK TO MAKE MY FORTUNE, SO I CAN MARRY HER. MAKE A LITTLE. LOSE IT IN '29. YEAH, THAT'S ME...
CHUFF!
...JUST ANOTHER WALL STREET SOB STORY.
SO I SWITCH TO A DIFFERENT LINE. SPECIAL WORK, YOU COULD SAY. AND I'M GETTING BY OKAY.
BUT THERE'S THIS GIRL, SEE...
...MARGO LANE, SORT OF A CO-WORKER OF MINE. SHE'S BEING HELD CAPTIVE IN THE HEART OF CHINA.
WHICH IS WHY I'M WAITING TO GET SLICED TO RIBBONS ON THE DOCKS OF SHANGHAI INSTEAD OF DEMONSTRATING CALF FEEDERS IN YPSILANTI.
STILL IN ALL, IT'S NOT A BAD JOB, MINE.

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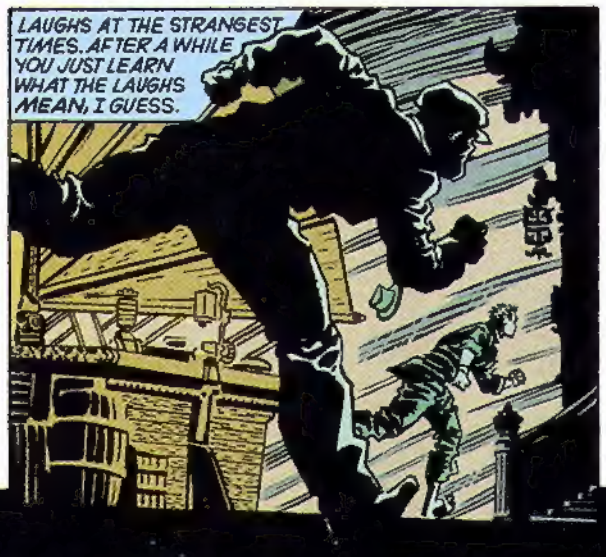
THE COAST

AT LEAST THE BOSS ALWAYS KEEPS THINGS INTERESTING.

BA-BA-BA-BA-BA-BAM

FROM THE SECRET ANNALS OF HARRY VINCENT, AS ADAPTED BY... GERARD JONES, WRITER; ROD WHIGHAM, PENCILLER; GERRY FERNANDEZ, INKER; BOB PINAHA, LETTER; ANTHONY TOLLIN, COLORIST; BRIAN AUGUSTYN, EDITOR. BASED UPON THE WORKS OF WALTER GIBSON.

HA HA HA HA HA
WANT ME TO GET HIM, BOSS?
FUNNY GUY, MY BOSS.

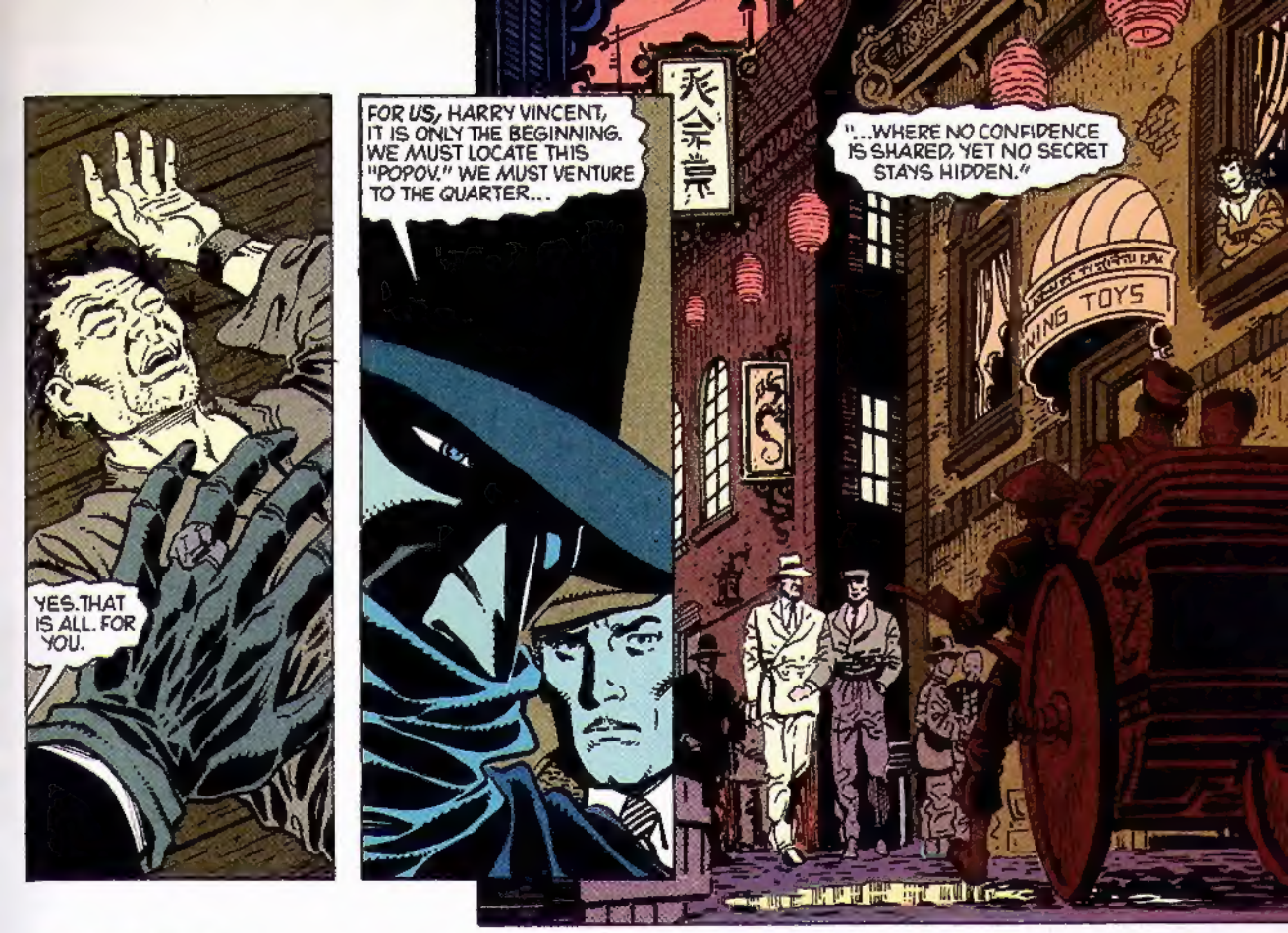

LAUGHS AT THE STRANGEST TIMES. AFTER A WHILE YOU JUST LEARN WHAT THE LAUGHS MEAN, I GUESS.

GOTCHA!

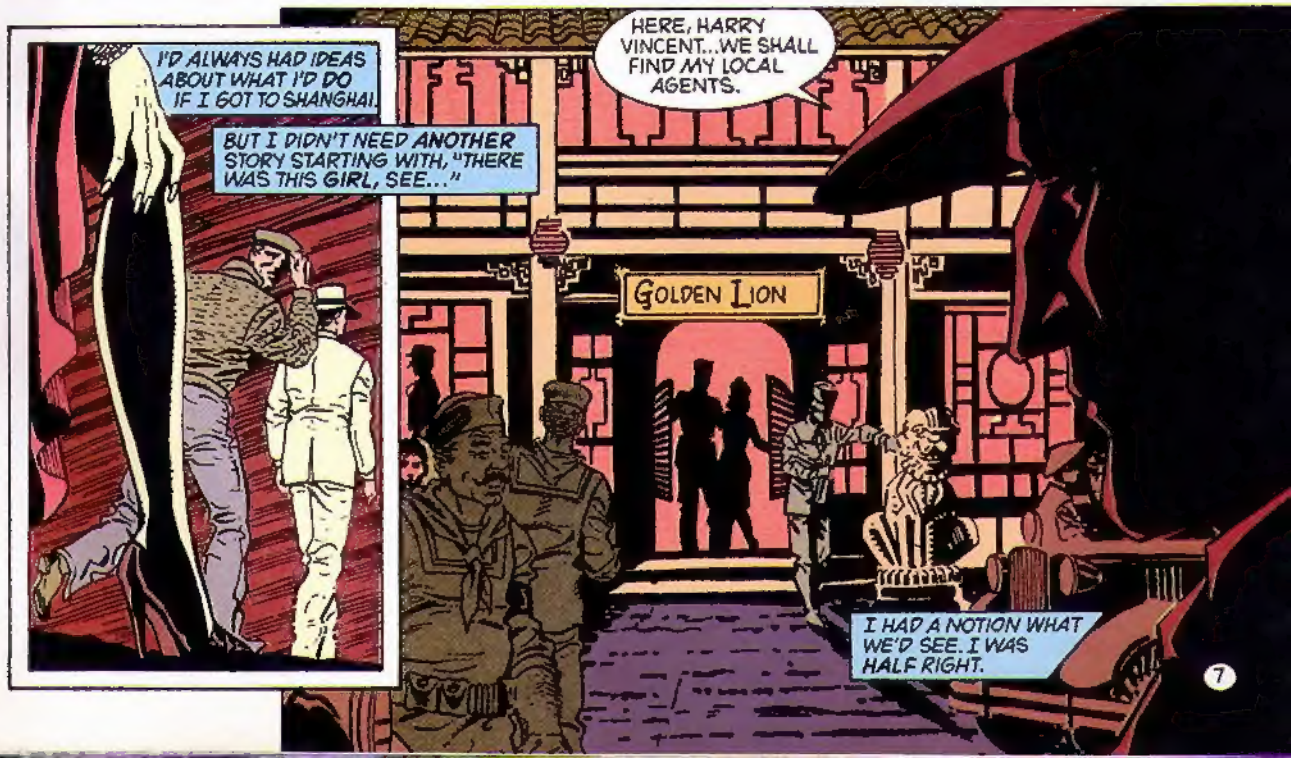
NOW TELL ME...
...WOULD YOU RATHER BE IN MICHIGAN?
4

GYUUHH!
DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D EVER TEACH ME THAT.
THE ROOSTER-STROKE OF FUNG-LUM REQUIRES TRAINING THAT NEITHER YOUR SPIRIT NOR YOUR PATIENCE COULD ENDURE, HARRY VINCENT.
NOW DISTURB ME NO MORE.
<LET THE GIRASOL BE YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS. LET ITS LIGHT BE YOUR LIFE. LET MY WILL BE YOUR WILL.>
<WHY DID YOU ATTACK MY AGENT?>
<WHO RENTS THE SHIPS FOR THE SECRET SAILINGS TO AMERICA?>
<WHO TOLD YOU TO KILL THE FOREIGNER WHO ASKS?>
5

I SERVED WITH A GANG OF HARBOR PIRATES...
...ONE DAY SAILORS IN STRANGE CLOTHING ATTACKED US. MONGOLS, WE HEARD...
...AND THIS MAN, THIS "POPOV," PAID HER TO HAVE US PROTECT HIS SECRETS. THAT IS ALL...
...THE EMPLOYER OF THE MONGOLS SOUGHT A CONFERENCE WITH OUR CELESTIAL PIRATE QUEEN...


YES. THAT IS ALL. FOR YOU.
FOR US, HARRY VINCENT, IT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING. WE MUST LOCATE THIS "POPOV." WE MUST VENTURE TO THE QUARTER...
"...WHERE NO CONFIDENCE IS SHARED, YET NO SECRET STAYS HIDDEN."
TOYS

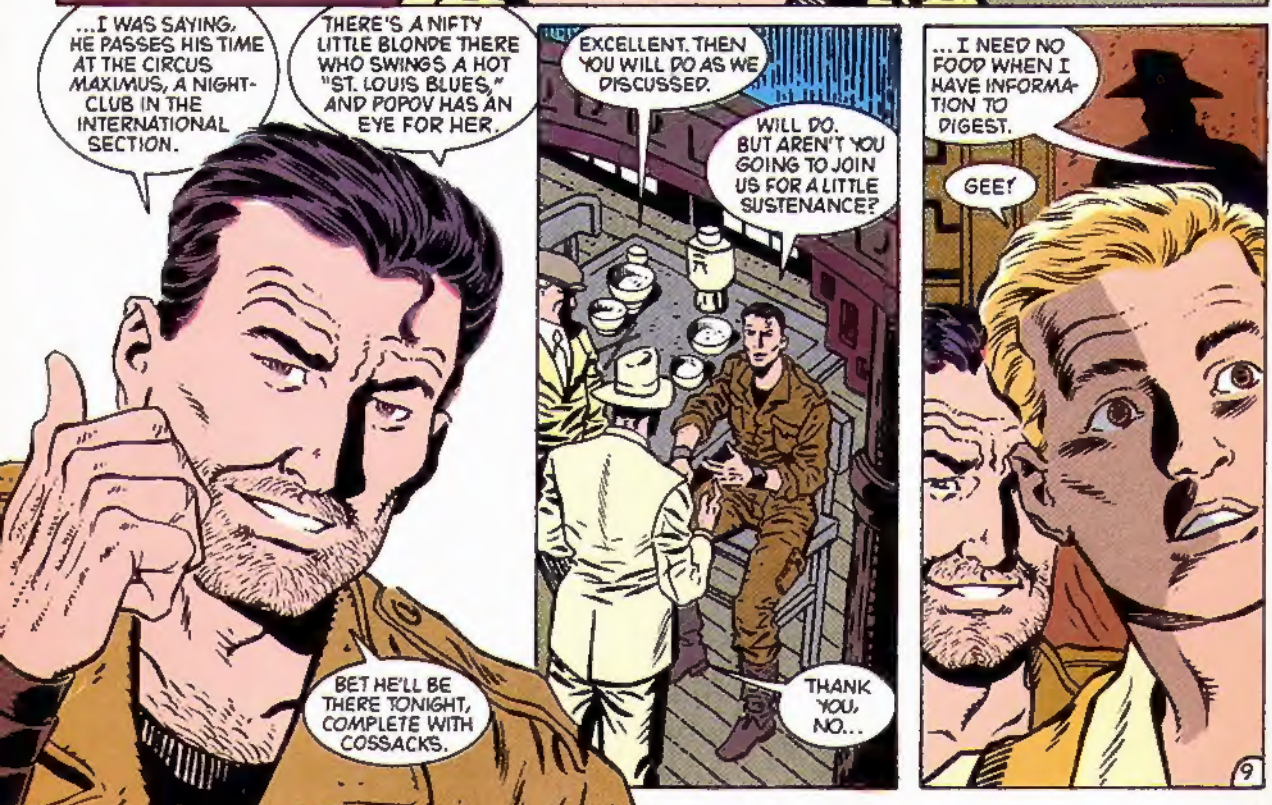
HEY, JOE! HOW YOU TODAY, HUH? HOW THOSE YANKEES DO TODAY, HUH?
YEAH, THIS WAS SHANGHAI, ALL RIGHT.

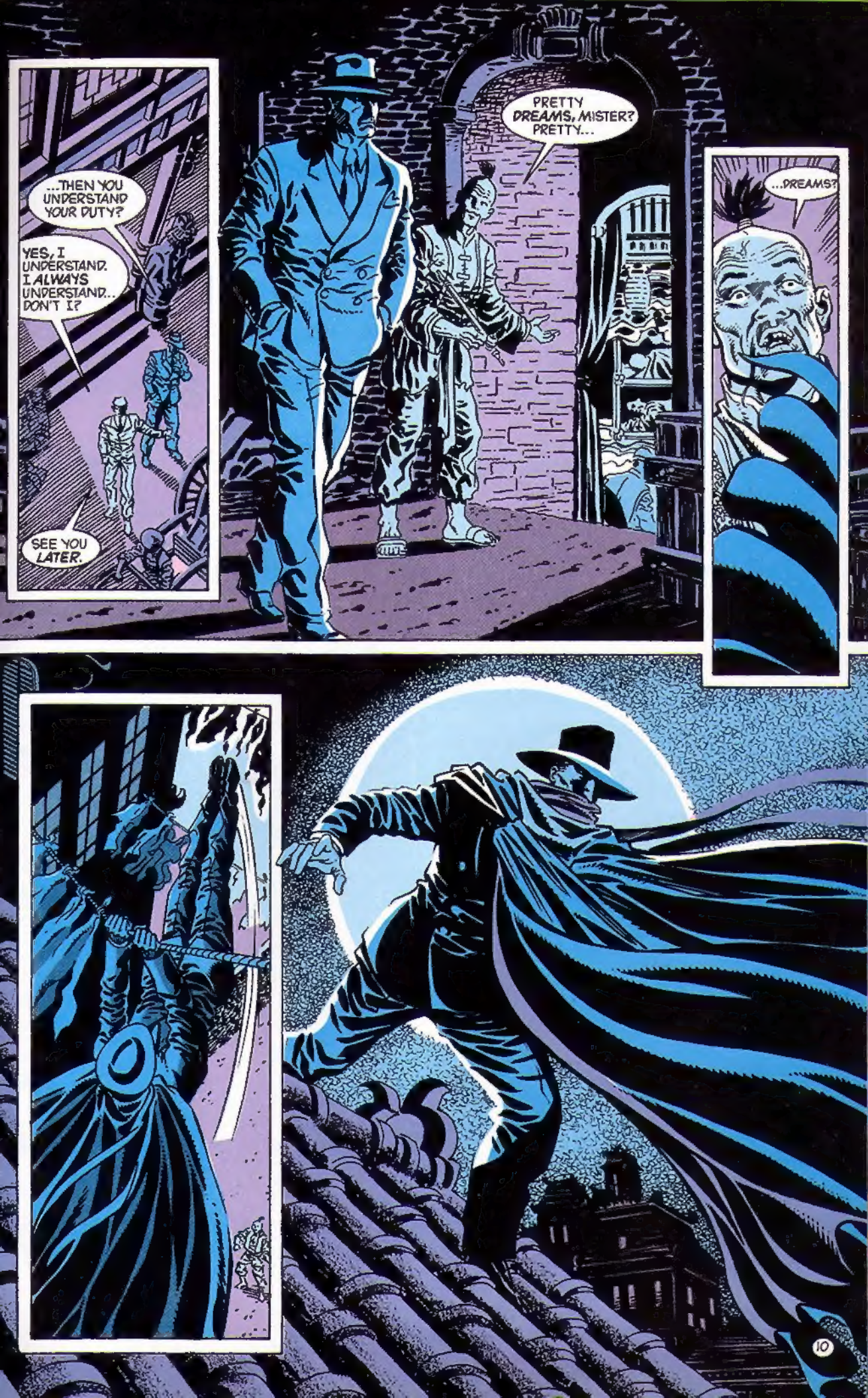

I'D ALWAYS HAD IDEAS ABOUT WHAT I'D DO IF I GOT TO SHANGHAI.
BUT I DIDN'T NEED ANOTHER STORY STARTING WITH, "THERE WAS THIS GIRL, SEE..."
HERE, HARRY VINCENT...WE SHALL FIND MY LOCAL AGENTS.
GOLDEN LION
I HAD A NOTION WHAT WE'D SEE. I WAS HALF RIGHT.

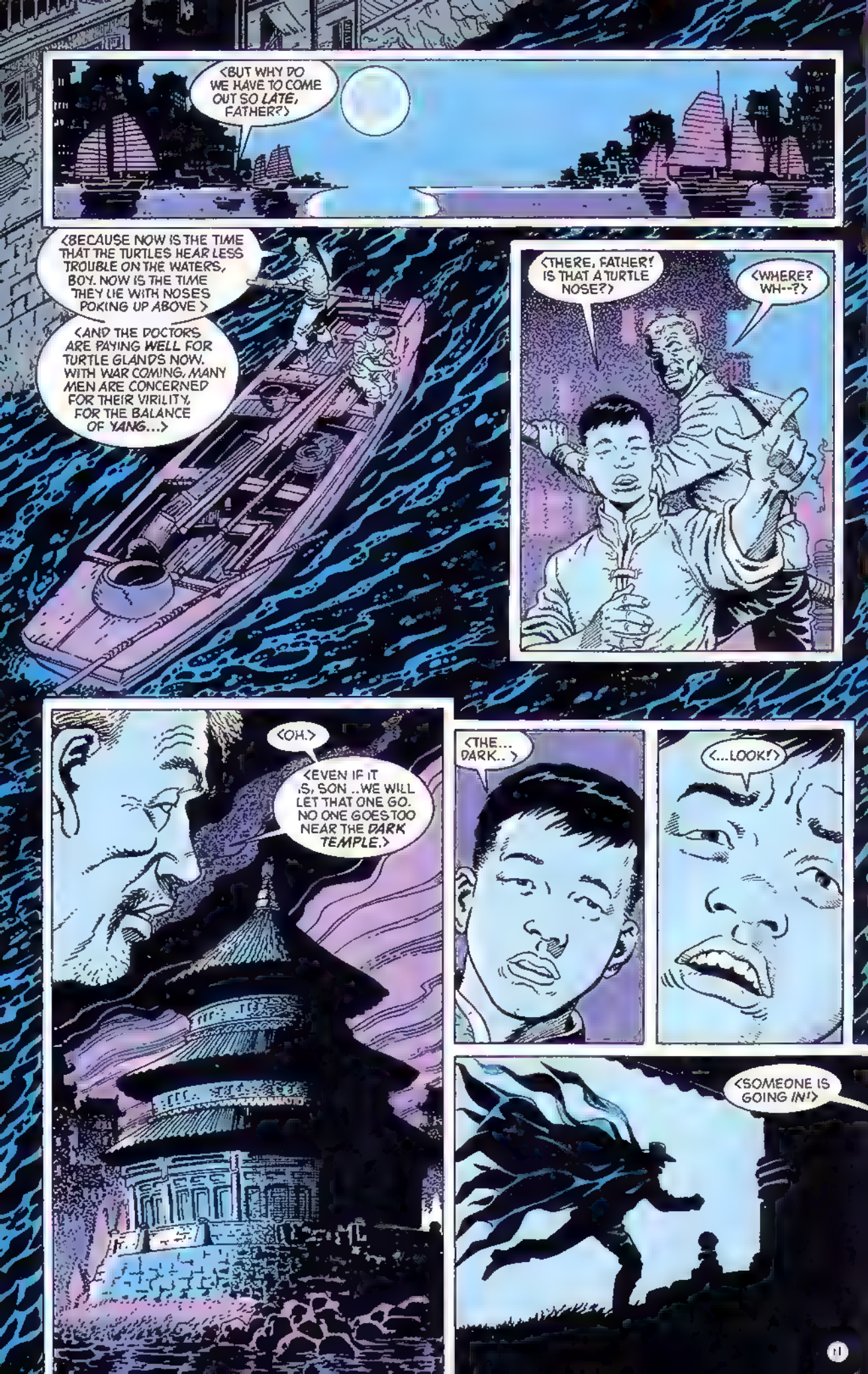
A COCKY GUY WITH A GRIN ON HIS LIPS AND A HAUNTED LOOK IN HIS EYES-- HE FIT THE BOSS' TYPE.
BUT A KID...?
GEE! D'YOU REALLY THINK WE'LL GET TO SEE 'IM?
BET WE WILL, KID. BUT KNOWING HIM, YOU'LL NEVER REALIZE YOU'RE SEEING HIM UNTIL HE'S RIGHT ON TOP OF--
GOOD EVENING, GENTLEMEN.
HOLY CATS!
WATCH THE WON-TON, PAL!
THE GUY INTRODUCED HIMSELF. TURNED OUT I DIDN'T HAVE TO.
PROUD TO MEET THE LEGENDARY "RIGHT HAND OF THE MASTER."
HUH. NEVER EVEN KNEW THEY CALLED ME THAT.
LET US HOPE THAT MR. VINCENT WILL AGAIN BE AS EFFECTIVE... AS HE ONCE WAS.
IT WASN'T THE FIRST DIG. JUST THE FIRST IN FRONT OF OTHER AGENTS.
YEAH, I'D CROSSED HIM ONCE. BUT I WAS BACK. BECAUSE HE WANTED.
I JUST DIDN'T KNOW WHY. I JUST DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS SUPPOSED TO DO.
THE LOCAL BOY HAD PLENTY ON POPOV...
...WHITE RUSSIAN EMIGRÉ WHO'S BEEN DEALING ALL KINDS OF CONTRABAND.
RUMOR IS HE'S BEEN SELLING ARMS TO THE JAPANESE IN MANCHURIA, EVEN THOUGH EVERYBODY FIGURES THEY'RE POISED TO INVADE CHINA ANY DAY NOW.
HE PASSES HIS TIME--
HEY! REMEMBER THE NOTE!
8

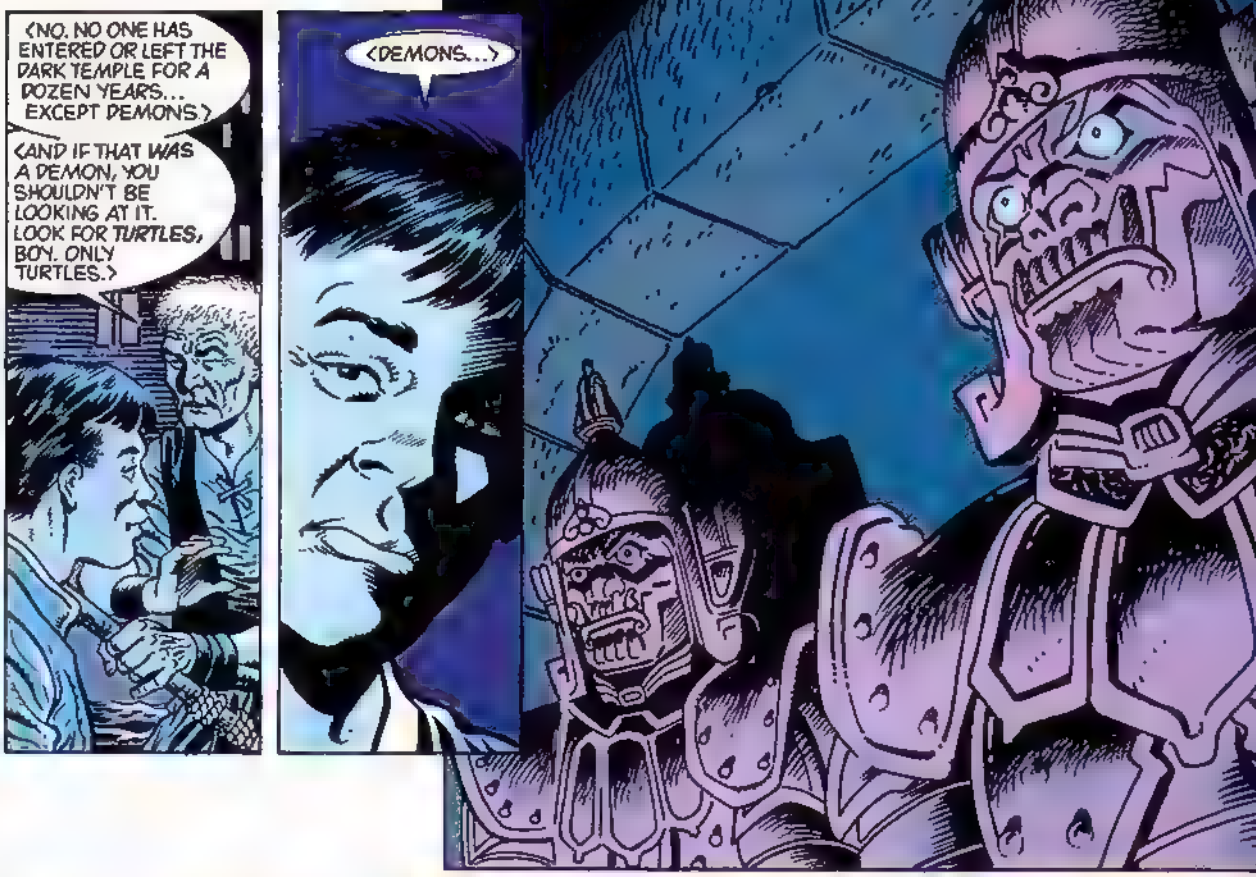
OH, YEAH. THIS WAS IN THE DROP-OFF SPOT...FROM MYRA RELDON.
"MOORED ON THE RIVER OVER NIGHT. HE VISITS A DARK PAGODA ALONE. TOMORROW UPSTREAM."
WHAT IS IT, BOSS? AND WHO'S THIS MYRA?
MYRA RELDON... IS MY FINEST FEMALE AGENT.
YOUR... FINEST.

SO WHAT ABOUT MARGO? AFTER EVERYTHING SHE'S DONE FOR HIM. AFTER RASPUTIN. AFTER PLAYING KIDNAP-BAIT TWICE FOR SHIWAN KHAN...
...OH, TO HELL WITH IT. NOTHING'LL CHANGE WHAT HE THINKS. SOMETIMES I WONDER IF HE WAS EVER HUMAN.
I KNOW WHY I'M HERE. I KNOW WHY I WANT SHIWAN.


...I WAS SAYING, HE PASSES HIS TIME AT THE CIRCUS MAXIMUS, A NIGHT-CLUB IN THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION.
THERE'S A NIFTY LITTLE BLONDE THERE WHO SWINGS A HOT "ST. LOUIS BLUES," AND POPOV HAS AN EYE FOR HER.
BET HE'LL BE THERE TONIGHT, COMPLETE WITH COSSACKS.
EXCELLENT. THEN YOU WILL DO AS WE DISCUSSED.
WILL DO. BUT AREN'T YOU GOING TO JOIN US FOR A LITTLE SUSTENANCE?
THANK YOU, NO...
...I NEED NO FOOD WHEN I HAVE INFORMATION TO DIGEST.
GEE!


...THEN YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR DUTY?
YES, I UNDERSTAND. I ALWAYS UNDERSTAND... DON'T I?
SEE YOU LATER.
PRETTY DREAMS, MISTER? PRETTY...
...DREAMS?

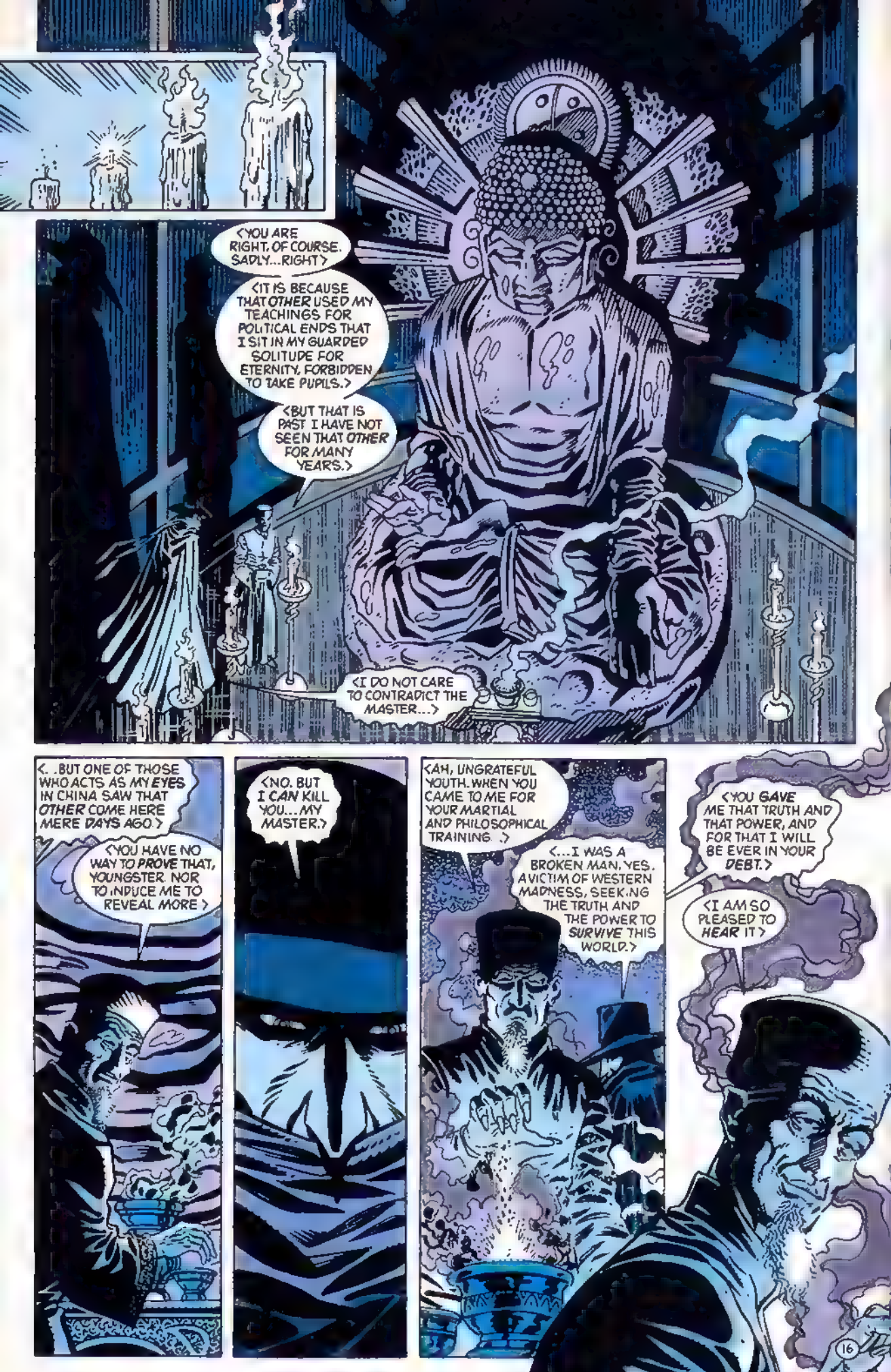

<BUT WHY DO WE HAVE TO COME OUT SO *LATE*, FATHER?>
<BECAUSE NOW IS THE TIME THAT THE TURTLES HEAR LESS TROUBLE ON THE WATERS, BOY. NOW IS THE TIME THEY LIE WITH NOSES POKING UP ABOVE >
<AND THE DOCTORS ARE PAYING *WELL* FOR TURTLE GLANDS NOW. WITH WAR COMING, MANY MEN ARE CONCERNED FOR THEIR VIRILITY, FOR THE BALANCE OF *YANG*...>
<THERE, FATHER! IS THAT A TURTLE NOSE?>
<WHERE? WH--?>
<OH.>
<EVEN IF IT IS, SON ..WE WILL LET THAT ONE GO. NO ONE GOES TOO NEAR THE *DARK TEMPLE*.>
<THE... DARK.. >
<...LOOK!>
<SOMEONE IS GOING *IN*!>


(NO. NO ONE HAS ENTERED OR LEFT THE DARK TEMPLE FOR A DOZEN YEARS... EXCEPT DEMONS.)
(AND IF THAT WAS A DEMON, YOU SHOULDN'T BE LOOKING AT IT. LOOK FOR TURTLES, BOY. ONLY TURTLES.)
(DEMONS...)

12

<I AM PLEASED TO SEE THAT THE POND OF YOUR MIND REMAINS UNRIPPLED, STUDENT>

<I AM PLEASED TO SEE THAT YOUR GUARDIANS REMAIN AS POTENT AS EVER, MASTER.>
<WELL, AN OLD MAN NEEDS THEM, YOU KNOW. ONLY LAST WEEK A THIEF BROKE INTO THE TEMPLE AND THOUGH HE HAD BEEN *TOLD* THAT THE GUARDIANS WERE ILLUSORY, HE DID NOT *BELIEVE* IT IN HIS HEART.>
<THERE WERE SO MANY PIECES OF HIM SCATTERED ABOUT, IT TOOK ME ALL NIGHT TO PICK HIM UP.>
<YES, MY OLD STUDENT, I AM PLEASED TO SEE YOUR STILLNESS OF MIND>
<BUT YOUR *SPIRIT* IS NOT AT PEACE.>
<MY SPIRIT CAN NEVER BE AT PEACE WHILE EVIL DEVOURS THE INNOCENT
<IT WAS EVER THUS. YOU CANNOT TRANSCEND THE DUALITY OF YOUR WESTERN CONSCIOUSNESS I AND THOU. DARK AND LIGHT EATER AND EATEN.>
<YOU WILL NOT SEE THE TRANSSUBSTANTIATION. YOU WILL NOT SEE THE ONENESS.>
<HOW COULD I *EVER* HAVE ALLOWED SUCH A HERETIC INTO MY SCHOOL?>
<IT WAS NOT MY HERESY THAT DESTROYED YOUR SCHOOL, MASTER. IT WAS THE *LOYALTY*... OF *ANOTHER*.>
15


〈YOU ARE RIGHT. OF COURSE. SADLY... RIGHT〉
〈IT IS BECAUSE THAT *OTHER* USED MY TEACHINGS FOR POLITICAL ENDS THAT I SIT IN MY GUARDED SOLITUDE FOR ETERNITY, FORBIDDEN TO TAKE PUPILS.〉
〈BUT THAT IS PAST. I HAVE NOT SEEN THAT *OTHER* FOR MANY YEARS.〉
〈I DO NOT CARE TO CONTRADICT THE MASTER...〉
〈...BUT ONE OF THOSE WHO ACTS AS *MY EYES* IN CHINA SAW THAT *OTHER* COME HERE *MERE DAYS AGO.*〉
〈YOU HAVE NO WAY TO *PROVE* THAT, YOUNGSTER. NOR TO INDUCE ME TO REVEAL MORE〉
〈NO. BUT I *CAN* KILL YOU... MY MASTER.〉
〈AH, UNGRATEFUL YOUTH. WHEN YOU CAME TO ME FOR YOUR MARTIAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL TRAINING.〉
〈...I WAS A BROKEN MAN, YES. A VICTIM OF WESTERN MADNESS, SEEKING THE TRUTH AND THE POWER TO *SURVIVE* THIS WORLD.〉
〈YOU *GAVE* ME THAT TRUTH AND THAT POWER, AND FOR THAT I WILL BE EVER IN YOUR *DEBT.*〉
〈I AM SO PLEASED TO *HEAR* IT〉

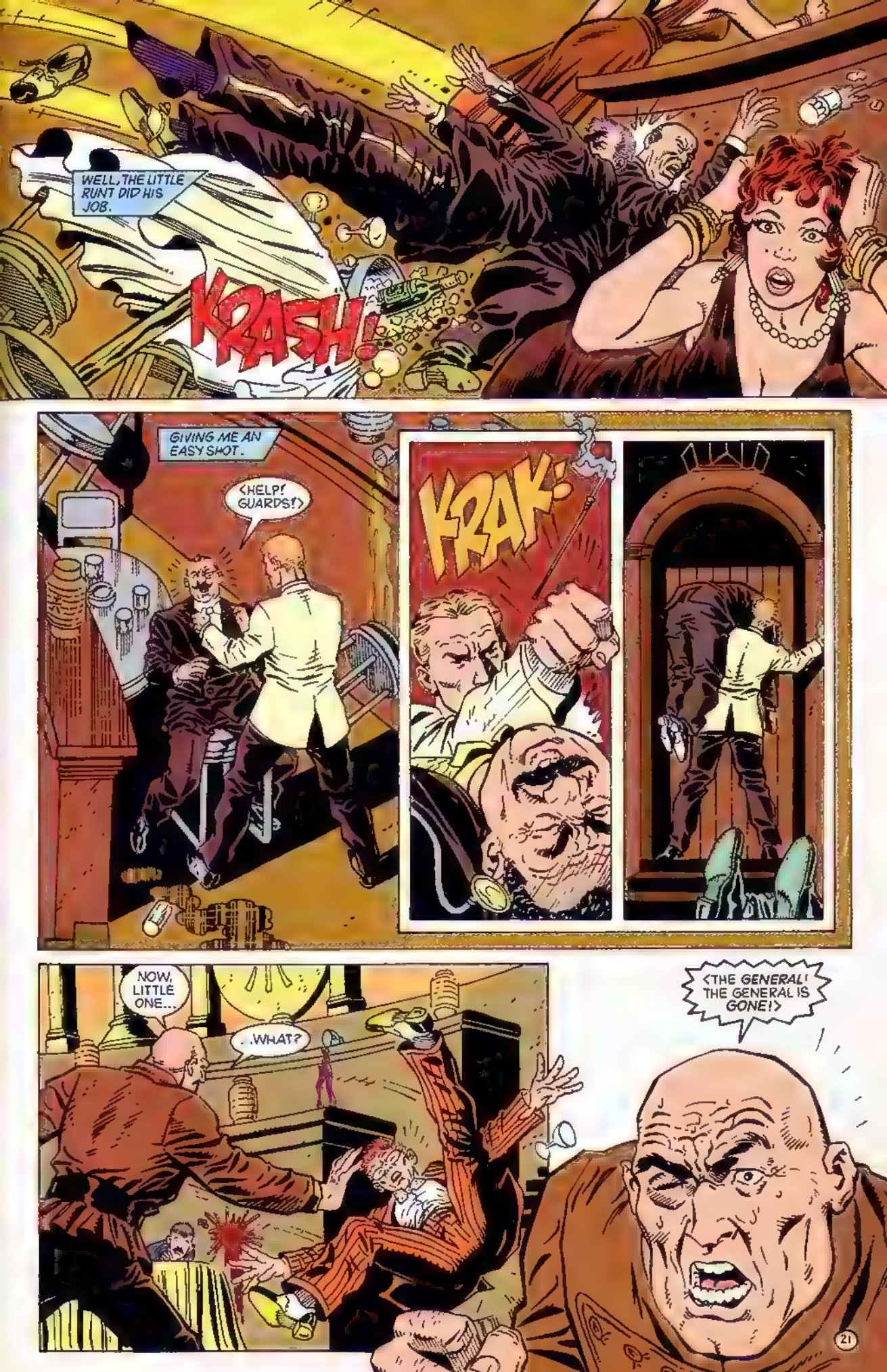
<BUT IN FINDING THAT TRUTH AND THAT POWER, I HAVE FOUND A CAUSE FOR WHICH TO LIVE AND THAT CAUSE MAKES ENEMIES, MASTER.>
<AND WHOEVER AIDS MY ENEMY... MUST BECOME MY ENEMY.>
<OF COURSE, YOU KNOW I CARE NOTHING FOR A MERE PHYSICAL SELF...>
<YOU HAVE CARED ENOUGH TO WORK QUITE DILIGENTLY AT PRESERVING IT THESE MANY CENTURIES.>
<I CARE NOTHING FOR THIS BODY, MY STUDENT. BUT IT DOES COME IN HANDY. . WHEN I WISH TO EAT LUNCH >
<WHAT IS IT YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW?>
"THE PARIS OF THE EAST," THEY CALL IT. YOU COULD SEE IT THAT WAY. IF YOU TRAINED YOUR EYES TO LOOK ONLY IN THE RIGHT SPOTS.
AND MAYBE THAT'S JUST WHAT THE RICH FOLK DO IN THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION.

I'VE GOT TO ADMIT, WHEN THE BOSS PICKS AN AGENT, HE PICKS AN OBSERVANT ONE.
♪ HOW I HATE TO SEE... THAT EVENIN' SUN GO DOWN... ♪
SHE WAS ONE NIFTY LITTLE BLONDE, ALL RIGHT.
♪ OH, HOW I HATE TO SEE... THAT EVENIN' SUN GO DOWN. ♪
AND SHE SANG IT HOT, ALMOST AS HOT AS THE BAND BEHIND HER. EVEN IF THEY WERE A COUPLE SHADES MORE SOULFUL THAN HER
IT'S LIKE SHE WAS HALF IN THEIR WORLD, AND HALF IN MINE. AND MAYBE THAT'S WHY I COULDN'T ENJOY IT.
BECAUSE WHENEVER I TRIED TO SEE HER, I'D SEE MARGO.
AND I WONDERED WHAT I'D SAY TO MARGO IF I EVER SAW HER AGAIN. HOW I'D TELL HER WHAT I KNEW.
THEN POPOV CAME IN. THAT WAS NICE.
I NEEDED A LITTLE MAYHEM TO SNAP ME OUT OF MY FUNK.
THE PIECES WERE IN PLACE. THE BOSS' OPERATIVES WEREN'T HARD TO SPOT.
OH, MOMMA!
18

WOTTA BON-BON! I AIN'T MAD AT NOBODY!
♪ SAINT LOUIS ♪ WOMAN, WITH YOUR DIAMOND RINGS. .
NOT AGENTS. YOU COULD TELL THAT. JUST HIRED RAMBLERS THAT THE MICK HAD PEGGED.
THE GUY WITH THE BROKEN NOSE AT LEAST LOOKED LIKE HE COULD FIGHT. THE LITTLE GUY DIDN'T LOOK GOOD FOR ANYTHING BUT STARTING TROUBLE.
<THE LITTLE AMERICAN MAKES A GREAT SHOW OVER YOUR CHOSEN LADY, GENERAL POPOV.>
BUT THEN, I GUESS THAT WAS THE WHOLE IDEA.
HOT DOG!
WHOOPEE!
...SAINT LOUIS WOMAN WITH YOUR ♪ DIAMOND RINGS ♪
!
HEY!
I THINK YOU WILL SHOW A LITTLE MORE DIGNITY FOR THE LADY, YES?
JUMPIN' BLUE BLAZES, SUH! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
I THINK I AM A CAPTAIN OF THE COSSACK GUARD, DEFENDING THE HONOR OF GENERAL POPOV.
OW!
IZZAT RIGHT?
WELL, BUDDY, MAYBE YOU SHOULD LEARN SOME THINGS ABOUT THE MANLY ART OF SELF-DEFENSE!
YOU WILL TEACH ME, I SUPPOSE?

KLOP!
THAT I WILL, SUH!
OBOY! WOTTA PUNCH!
YOU'LL HAVE TO FIGHT US ALL, AMERICAN!
THAT'LL BE A PLEASURE!
WOW!
HOT ZIGGETY DING! WOTTA FIGHT!
BLAZES!
BOP!
YIPEE!
WHAM!
KILL THEM!
KRASH!

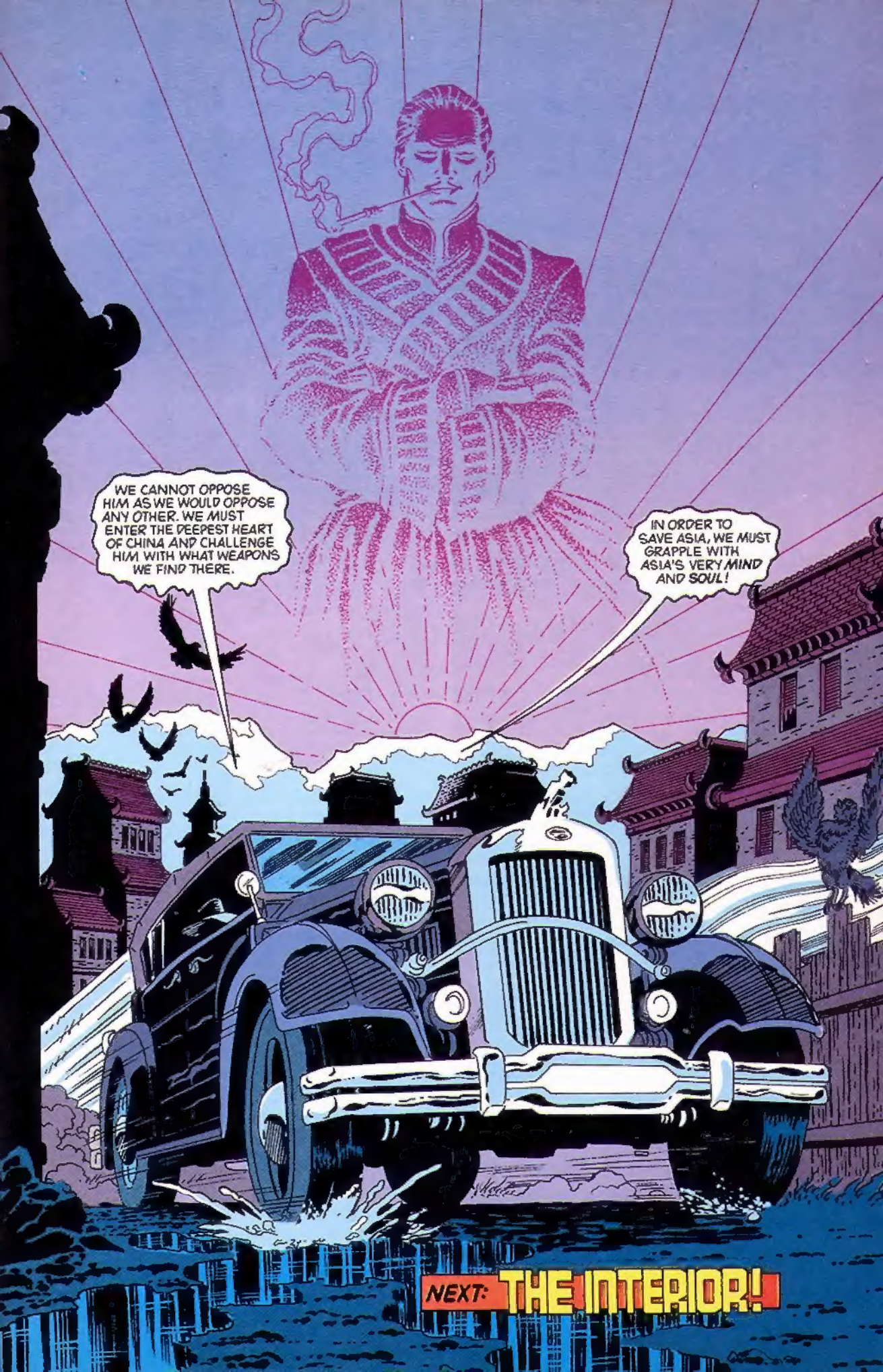
ЧУДЕСНЫЙ СМРАД!
KAMPF! KAMPF!


WELL, THE LITTLE RUNT DID HIS JOB.
KRASH!
GIVING ME AN EASY SHOT.
<HELP! GUARDS!>
KRAK!
NOW, LITTLE ONE...
...WHAT?
<THE GENERAL! THE GENERAL IS GONE!>

WH... WHERE... WHERE ARE YOU..
JUST HOP IN THIS V8 RICKSHAW OF MINE, POPS, AND YOU'LL FIND OUT
INTO THE CHINESE QUARTER! DOUBLE-TIME!
SHOO MIKE!
PLEASE ..OH, PLEASE...
YOU'RE PROTECTING SOMEBODY RUNNING UNLICENSED SHIPS TO THE U.S., POPOV.
YOU'RE COVERING UP THE TRANSPORTATION OF ARMAMENTS INTO THE CHINESE INTERIOR-- AM I RIGHT?
NO! NO! I'VE NEVER--
NO? WELL, I HAVE EVIDENCE THAT YOU'RE RUNNING GUNS FOR THE JAPANESE! AND WITH ENOUGH EVIDENCE, I COULD PROBABLY MAKE EVEN PRESIDENT "CASH-MY-CHECK" IN PEKING TAKE NOTICE!
NO, NO, NO! THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE JAPANESE! DON'T TELL THEM THIS IS TREASON! IT IS ONLY SMUGGLING!
ONLY A PRIVATE CLIENT!
I HAVE PAID OFF OFFICIALS SO HE CAN SEND BARGES UP THE CANALS, TOWARD SHANDONG
BARGES FULL OF AIRPLANES...AND BOMBS... AND TANKS... AND AUTOMATIC RIFLES...

HWRREEEE
THANKS FOR THE DOPE, POPOV. I GUESS YOU CAN FIND YOUR WAY HOME!
VROOOAR
SKREEEEEEE
EEEEEEE
EEE

HAVE YOU LEARNED WHAT I NEEDED?
HAVE... I... LEARNED.
...UH. YEAH. SHIWAN'S BEEN SHIPPING AN ARMY'S WORTH OF MATERIEL TOWARD THE YELLOW RIVER HE...
WHERE? WHERE HAS HE FOUND THE RESOURCES FOR THIS? WHO FINANCES HIM? WHO ACQUIRES FOR HIM? THAT IS WHAT I CANNOT SEE.
BUT HE IS A CLEVER ONE, SHIWAN...
I KNEW HIM, HARRY VINCENT I HAVE LEARNED WHAT I SOUGHT, AND IT IS AS I FEARED.
UNDER A DIFFERENT NAME, A DIFFERENT FACE, I KNEW SHIWAN KHAN
HE TRAINED UNDER MY MASTER. THE SAME WHO TAUGHT ME MY... SPECIAL SKILLS. BUT HE PERVERTS HIS TRAINING TO HIS DREAMS OF CONQUEST.
TO HIS MENTAL AND PHYSICAL MASTERY HE ADDS AN ARMY.


WE CANNOT OPPOSE HIM AS WE WOULD OPPOSE ANY OTHER. WE MUST ENTER THE DEEPEST HEART OF CHINA AND CHALLENGE HIM WITH WHAT WEAPONS WE FIND THERE.
IN ORDER TO SAVE ASIA, WE MUST GRAPPLE WITH ASIA'S VERY MIND AND SOUL!
NEXT: THE INTERIOR!

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Well, it looks as though our pleas for mail have not gone unanswered. We received more mail in the past month than we have in a while. Let's keep it coming. We'll be covering issues #22 and #23 herein. Now, on to you.

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

What could be more intriguing than two matched foes, neither superpowered nor demented, pitted against one another? How about Margo Lane?

Like the triangle of mystery. I hope the upcoming "truth" doesn't give too much away.

It's getting harder to request Eduardo back when Rod is doing such a good job.

Melissa Page
Nortonville, KY

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

Issue #22—The Shadow vs. Shiwan Khan. The story—a nice illustration of the old saying "You're not paranoid...you *do* have enemies." The Shadow sweating? Not exactly fear, but a great deal of discomfort, perhaps. He doesn't find himself in this sort of corner very often.

Shiwan Khan, as presented here, is chilling. He's changeable as a chameleon and capable of blending into most surroundings. He refuses to be typecast and defies easy analysis. And, you're most scared of what hides *under* that sophisticated veneer...something we haven't seen yet.

Still, Khan is dumb enough that he doesn't know grudging respect when he sees it. The Shadow lets very few people "go." Taking prisoners is hardly his motto. So that could be the only *possible* reason.

Charles D. Brown
Brentwood, NY

* * * * *

Hey, Brian—

THE SHADOW STRIKES! #23 kept me poised on the edge of my seat.

"Citadels" was another excellent story and the sequence that encompassed pages 8 through 10 was *brilliant*. Also, the battle between Shiwan Khan and the Shadow raised an awful lot of questions. And what's the deal with their similar rings?

Also, I really felt sorry for Vincent. To be so damn close to retrieving Margo, only to see Khan abscond with her...Man, what a heartbreaker. Plus he's no longer an agent. Can it get any worse for the dude?

Let's go to China.

Uncle Elvis
Dawson Springs, KY

* * * * *

Dear Mr. Augustyn,

THE SHADOW STRIKES! #23 was very refreshing. There was just the right blend of action, adventure and terror to make it seem that it came right from the pages of the pulps.

I thought they didn't make comic books like this anymore.

Tim Durbin
Indianapolis, IN

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

Usually I don't bother writing letters to comics unless I have a bitter complaint; however, I couldn't resist your plea in #20. Can't have you crying your eyes out and making the ink run!

While I considered Eduardo Barreto's art suitable to the comic and in no way objectionable (obviously, since I didn't write any letter of bitter complaint), I prefer the current team of Rod Whigham and Gerry Fernandez. I also enjoyed the Mark Badger issues. Don't know if I want to see him on full-time, but I don't think I'd strongly object, either. (Certainly wouldn't be obnoxious about it, as I gather many other unadventurous types were.)

Story-wise, this is definitely the best of the recent Shadow series. (The last one made the Shadow so unredeemably obnoxious that I skipped the letter of bitter complaint and just quit buying, and, while I enjoyed the Chaykin miniseries, the portrayal of the Shadow as chauvinistic pill was deplorable.) The plots are reminiscent of the original pulps, and the inclusion of social issues is never heavy-handed.

Regarding the Shadow's "true" identity—last I heard, he was a pilot named Kent Allard, though there were intimations that this might be another, deeper "cover."

Julie Parkinson
Coronado, CA

* * * * *

Dear Shadow Gang,

Once more I raise my eyes from an issue of THE SHADOW STRIKES!, number 23 in particular, and with bated breath I sigh—yes, sigh—a sigh that says "Boy, that was great!"

A sigh that comprises an odd mixture of relief, that Margo and the team are still fighting fit from last issue's cliffhanger, exhilaration from the excitement of the present copy, and anticipation for the next issue.

DC's series of the late '70s is now a classic of that period. Let's hope with all the great stuff around at this moment in time, this present series will prove just as enduring as the man himself. Keep up the good work, guys and gals, knowing you're making an ardent Shadowphile happy. Let's hope the Shadow is here to stay for a long time to come.

Welcome to the 1990's Shadow.

Welcome to the Great Age.

Agent R, a.k.a. R. Hollingdale
Kent, England

* * * * *

Gentlemen—

I was sitting in my bed this afternoon—Gorbachëv had been toppled, Hurricane Bob was literally in my back yard, and I was running a fever of 102 degrees. I don't know what anybody else would do, but I wanted to read a good comic.

Maybe it was the gravity of the moment, maybe it was the fever—but I read a book that compelled me to dash off some comments to you. THE SHADOW STRIKES! #23 was a finer comic than I have read in a long time.

I've read all the Shadow comics. Manymanymany of the Street and Smith series. I even read the Archie Adventure Series. The less said about that, the better. Let's just say I was very young and much less discriminating than I have since learned to be. I enjoyed some of the '70s DC run. And the Marvel one-shot. Howard Chaykin's version was a shock, but a pleasant one. I never warmed to the black humor of Helfer's run. But, you've found a winner in THE SHADOW STRIKES! Jones has caught the real Shadow. I mean the REAL Shadow.

This is the Shadow that has been hinted at. In the pulps, in the comics, on the radio, there were occasional flashes of the Real Shadow; but, in this series Jones has set up a true mystery man. The human-scale with the cloaked past has been a real delight.

Jones hasn't hit it all the time, but the last few issues, capped by #23, have provided the best comic book Shadow I've read. The intelligence of the character was brought out by the crisp captions and the clever dialogue that added to the pictures and complemented them, rather than redundantly describing them. A bit more of Kent's past came out—just enough to tease.

The pacing of the story nicely balanced the action and the plot. This was a good story to read as well as look at.

I like this book and it keeps getting better and better. Jones is becoming more and more consistent at the higher levels. I am concerned to see the letter column replaced by a public-service ad. I hope this doesn't mean that THE SHADOW STRIKES! is suffering from poor circulation.

By the way, tell Jones his father would approve.

When I was young, I felt that my favorite comics were aimed at smart twelve-year-old kids. Now I feel that most comics are written for stupid nineteen-year-olds. This one rose above the pack.

Nice work.

Bob Klein
Grafton, MA

Bob, forgive me for some liberties I was forced to take with your letter in order to fit it into this column. Glad to hear that you and the other folks are happy with our interpretation of the Shadow. Keep those cards and letters coming in.

—Bob Kahan

* * * * *

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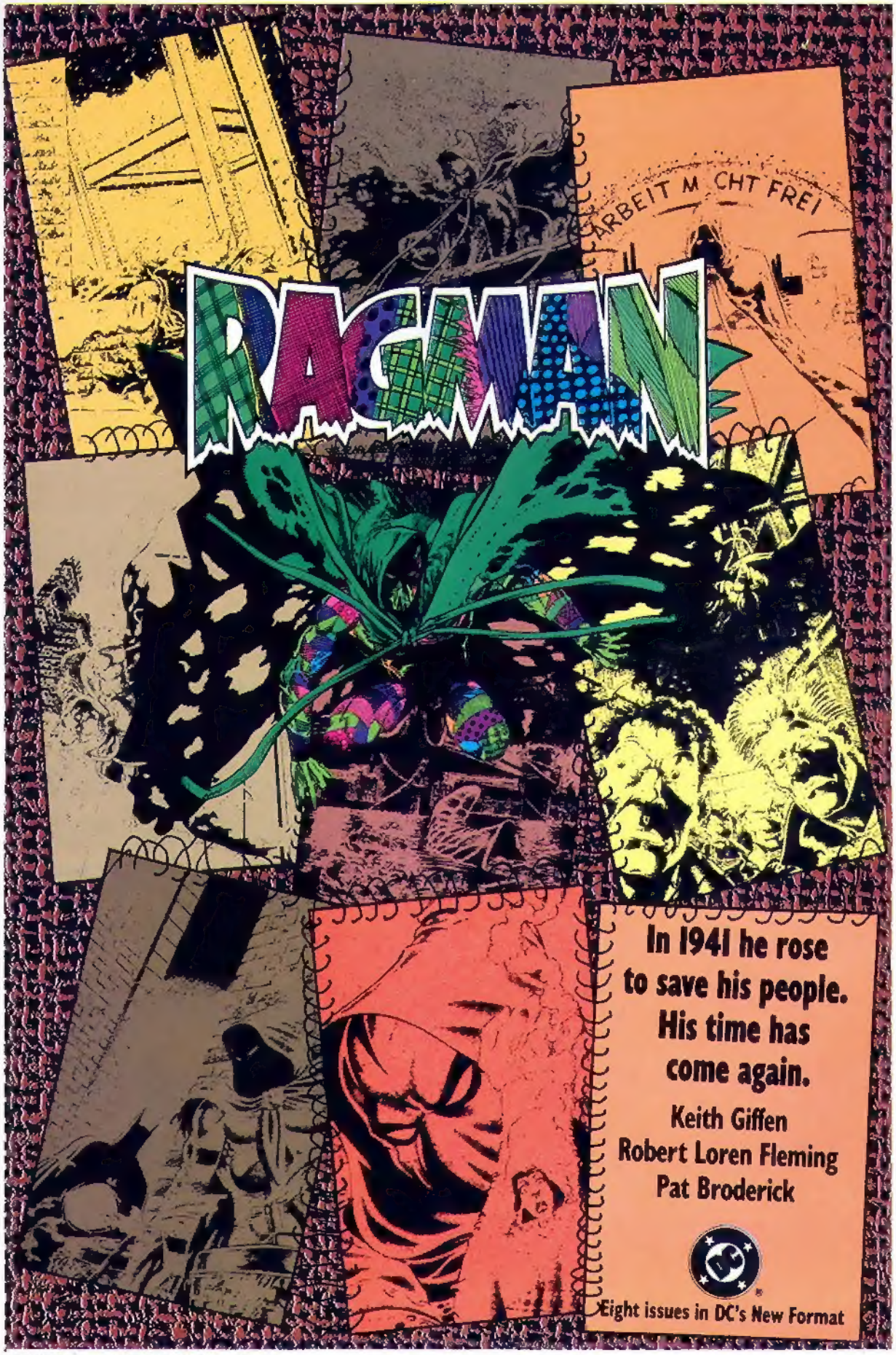
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